

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 2010

2010 SEASON

After the euphoria of 2009, it is sad to have to report that 2010 produced results at the opposite end of the scale. We won only 9 out of 39 matches, losing 15 and cancelling 8. In mitigation of the 8 cancelled matches, the Ramblers and our opponents were equally culpable.

One of the reasons for last years much improved results was the excellent turn out record of the South African tourists from the previous winter. Comparing this year's batting and bowling statistics with 2009 is rather depressing. This year no player batted more than 8 times; 267 runs from Tim Hawk was the highest aggregate of runs; no bowler bowled 50 overs; no bowler took 10 wickets.

It is dangerous to compare different eras, but looking back to the early 70s one finds David Barber making 1,000 runs two years in a row; often more than 5 batsmen scoring over 500 runs; bowlers bowling over 300 overs and Theo Fennell, Dick Robins and Anthony de Grey frequently getting close to or exceeding 50 wickets.

What has changed? The Club has half the number of matches, and that is a result of there being fewer players willing to turn out on a regular basis. It would seem that the primary reason is the plethora of alternative attractions available each weekend ranging from weddings, to televised sport, to a larger variety of participating sports and to family activities. Cricket is an all day activity which seems to be less acceptable today than it used to be.

Enough of my moaning! The Club is generally in good heart and I expect our on field results are going to vary considerably from year to year. The hard work that the Hon Sec and his Assistant put in on an annual basis should receive better support and I strongly encourage the playing membership to ensure that they give them the support they deserve.

In 2012 we celebrate 150 years of our existence. As luck would have it, this coincides with our four yearly club dinner cycle. I am keen to arrange rather more than just another

dinner and we have formed a small sub committee to look at various alternatives. It may sound rather “non Rambler”, but this will include looking at some form of sponsorship so that we can, perhaps, “splash out” a bit.

CRICKETER CUP

We assembled one of our strongest batting sides to play the Bradfield Waifs at Eton in the first round. We won the toss and batted. At the end of the first over we were 0 for 2. Simon Hawk got a terrible decision being given out caught behind off his hip first ball and then Ed Bruce was bowled two balls later. This is a difficult position to recover from fully, but when the Loudon brothers were batting together a good final total looked realistic. However both succumbed to the innocuous looking, but no doubt wily, off spin of Peter Came. The later order did not really do themselves justice and our final total of 194 was some way short of what most spectators considered to be required.

Unfortunately the predictions about our total proved correct and despite the bowlers, supported by the fielders, performing perfectly satisfactorily they never had enough to play with against an experienced batting line out who played very sensibly. We finally lost in the 47th over by 4 wickets.

Hugo Loudon has captained the side very well and with great enthusiasm for 6 years, but he feels the time is right for him to hand over the reins. Very sensibly he has persuaded his brother, Alex, to succeed him and we wish Alex the very best of luck. We should thank Hugo for the immense amount of time and energy that he has put into the job and also congratulate him on a mainly successful tenure despite not being able to capture the ultimate prize.

The first round next year will be at Eton where we will play the Old Cranleighans. The Old Cranleighans replaced the Old Blundelians in the competition 3 years ago and it will be the first time that we will play them in the competition, although we have, for many years, had a match against them at Cranleigh. Jim Swanton, as an old boy of Cranleigh, would have enjoyed the occasion had it been a few years earlier.

LORD'S

Eton won the toss and batted. We made a good fast start with the captain, Vanderspar, very much to the fore, until he was rather unluckily bowled off body and bat. Sangha looked in good form, but, after hitting one big 6, he pulled a long hop rather lazily to mid on. Gross had started slowly but a good partnership with Shaw developed until both were out just before lunch. Thereafter the batting, and most particularly the running

between the wickets, showed distinct signs of nerves and despite a few elegant shots the batting disappointed and the innings fell away with Eton being bowled out for 204.

Eton started well in the field with Sangha catching Baird at the second attempt at slip and Ballantine-Dykes taking a brilliant catch to get rid of White. Cousens was then LBW to Warburton to make Harrow 12 for 3. Unfortunately that was as good as it got for Eton and a succession of wides did nothing for the confidence of Tidbury in particular. The spinners, especially Fox, bowled with great control, but didn't really threaten to take wickets sufficiently often. Harrow eventually won by 5 wickets with Sert making a very good 105 not out.

A sad aftermath to the match was the number of complaints that I received from members about what they considered to be the inappropriate on field behaviour of some of the Eton side. On the day I thought, perhaps, it was just me getting ever older, but clearly it was widely seen as rather unattractive. I have spoken to the Master in Charge, who was well aware of the situation and I shall be disappointed if we see the same again. The date for next year's match is Saturday, June 25th.

FINANCES

You will see from the attached accounts that the Club finances are in good order. The increase in the Life Membership Fee that was introduced last year has had a considerable impact on the income and it still remains very good value compared to some of our "sister" clubs.

ETON RAMBLER FUND

I have recorded before that the Fund has been used to allow the School to employ an extra coach for the younger cricketers and this will continue.

In addition we have contributed £20,000 towards a new irrigation system for Upper Club. This was part of a system to cover The Field, Mesopotamia and Upper Club.

Anyone visiting Upper Club will be able to see the new all weather nets that are currently being constructed on the Triangle. The Ramblers have put £35,000 towards this project, but the main contribution has come most generously from Johnnie Boden who enabled the scheme to proceed with a donation of £75,000. The School has paid the balance of £20,000 as well as refurbishing the existing all weather nets next to the Upper Club pavilion.

It distresses me to report that the Ramblers' donations compare most unfavourably with those raised by the Vikings. We have almost the same number of members, but they have raised £300,000 against our £120,000. 18% of their membership has contributed against 10% of ours. We have other projects in mind and, therefore, you will be hearing from me again. There is always the waste paper basket, but I very much hope the letter will not end up there without being seriously considered.

CLUB HISTORY

The History is making great strides in the right direction at last, with Christopher Horne devoting most of his available time to finishing it. He is immensely grateful to all those who put money towards the book and anticipates repaying those concerned during the course of this year.

OBITUARIES

Whilst our losses were numerically smaller than some years we have lost a number of members at a sadly young age.

Maj RCL Pilkington was not in the "young" category and was in the XIs of 1934 and 35. He was a great supporter of the club, particularly later in life, when he was a regular attender at our dinners.

Oliver Worseley was of the Hovingham dynasty. Whilst he was not in the XI, he often captained his father's XI against us when we were lucky enough to play at Hovingham during our Yorkshire Tour. His main loves were the countryside and the arts to which he gave a great deal of his time being a director of the Theatre Royal in York.

Alec Metaxa failed to get into Charles Robins' strong 1953 side, but he was a batsman who struck fear into cover and extra cover with the ferocity of his driving. He was also the sire of two very talented games playing sons. Sir Simon Hornby left Eton in the same year, but was better known for his gardening exploits and as Chairman of WH Smith than for his on field exploits.

George Jeffreys was a fine opening bowler who had a superb action which, on occasions, when everything clicked, made him quite a proposition for opening batsmen. He played much of his cricket at Burtons Court but was also an enthusiastic Rambler. Another great enthusiast was Richard Barber. His cricket was mildly agricultural, but sometimes effective and his fielding was always an asset. This, no doubt, stemmed from his tremendous ability as a goalkeeper for the OE Football XI. He was exceptionally brave in goal, which, during the 60s and 70s, was an extremely busy occupation.

Nick Selwyn was in the 1964 XI. His prime role was as wicket keeper, but in the latter part of the season he also opened the batting. Nick was an exceptional all round sportsman being in the Field and Rugger XV, as well as being Keeper of Boxing.

Edward Mann, son of George, should have been in the 1979 XI had he not felt that a Summer Half playing for Strawberry was more his scene. He was a much better player than he thought he was and Strawberry was less pressurised. He played frequently for the Ramblers and when he scored runs, which he often did, the innings was worth watching.

Harry Rawlinson was a most stylish batsman in the XIs in 1979 and 80, being captain in his second year. He went on to Oxford where he won a Blue twice. Much to many people's surprise this was as a bowler, batting at number 10. He played in the Cricketer Cup side for several years as well as supporting the club in many other fixtures.

Floreat Etona

PG Lowndes
President